THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) and (b) Large scale chemical industries are not permitted to come up in and around Bombay city without prior clearance from environmental angle.

Procedure has been evolved according to which the letters of intent are converted into industrial licences only after the following conditions have been fulfilled:

— The State Director of Industries confirms that the site of the project has been approved from environmental angle by the competent State Authority;

— The entrepreneur commits both to the State Government and Central Government that he will instal the appropriate equipment and implement the prescribed measures for the prevention and control of pollution; and

— The concerned State Pollution Control Board has certified that the proposal meets with environmental requirements and that the equipment installed or proposed to be installed are adequate and appropriate to the requirements.

Proposal to amend Section 309 I.P.C.

331. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to amend section 309 of the Indian Penal Code in view of the recent judgment of Bombay High Court declaring it to be ultra vires of the constitution;

(b) if so, when the amendment is likely to be made; and

(c) if answer to part (a) above be in the negative, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) The Government has applied for and is awaiting a copy of the judgment of the Bombay High Court. The Law Commission has also recommended the repeal of section 309 IPC. This recommendation will be kept in mind when Government processes amendments to the Indian Penal Code.

Survey of total area under forests

332. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the remote sensing satellite survey of the country indicates that the forest area of the country is only about 11 to 12 per cent of the total geographical area of the country as against the earlier estimate of around 23 per cent;

(b) whether in view of this alarming ecological situation, the Government propose to take certain radical steps like imposing a total ban on felling of trees to arrest this trend; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) Forest area of the conutry, as assessed by the National Remote Sensing Agency on the basis of visual interpretation of Landsat data for 1980-82, is 14.1 per cent of the total geographical area. The registered forest area, however(is 22.7 per cent.

(b) and (c) The Government have no proposal under consideration for imposing a total ban on felling of trees. However, the State Governments have been advised to consider banning of all fellings above 1000 metres in the hills and mountains.